

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action mailed August 12, 2003, claim 51 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 2-4 were rejected for insufficient antecedent basis. Claims 1-2, 4-13, 15-23, 26-27, 31-38, 40-50, 53-58, 75-103 and 106-108 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Goodrich (US 6,277,337). Claims 3, 14, 24-25, 28-30, 39, 51-52, 59-74, 104-105 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Goodrich (US 6,277,337). Applicant respectfully traverses all rejections.

The Amendments

Claim 51 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis. The amendment to claim 51 is supported by claim 50, from which claim 51 depends. Claims 2-4 have been amended to provide proper antecedent basis. The amendment to claims 2-4 is supported by claim 1, from which claims 2-4 depend. Claims 1, 59 and 68 have been amended to correct typographical errors. No new matter is added by any amendment.

Rejection of claims 51 and 2-4

The amendments to claims 51 and 2-4 described above are believed to overcome the rejections of claims 51 and 2-4. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejection

Claims 1-2, 4-13, 15-23, 26-27, 31-38, 40-50, 53-58, 75-103 and 106-108 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Goodrich (US 6,277,337). This rejection is improper. 35 U.S.C. 102(b) recites "A person shall be entitled to a patent unless the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of the application for patent in the United States." The Goodrich patent (US 6,277,337) was patented on August 21, 2001. The subject application was filed on June 15, 2000. The Goodrich patent (US 6,277,337) was not patented more than one year prior to June 15, 2000 (the filing date of the subject application). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection

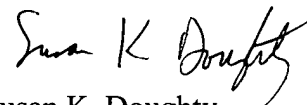
Claims 3, 14, 24-25, 28-30, 39, 51-52, 59-74, 104-105 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Goodrich (US 6,277,337). Since the Goodrich patent (US 6,277,337) is not a proper reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), it is also improperly cited under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above arguments, it is believed all rejections are overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested. If there are any issues remaining to patentability, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned.

Enclosed herewith is a Petition for Extension of Time (one month) and a check in the amount of \$110.00 (one month extension of time fee for large entity). If the amount submitted is incorrect, however, please credit any overpayments or deduct any deficiency, including the fee for any extensions of time required, from Deposit Account No. 07-1969.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan K. Doughty
Reg. No. 43,595

GREENLEE, WINNER AND SULLIVAN, P.C.
5370 Manhattan Circle, Suite 201
Boulder, CO 80303
Telephone: (303) 499-8080
Facsimile: (303) 499-8089
E-mail: winner@greenwin.com

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